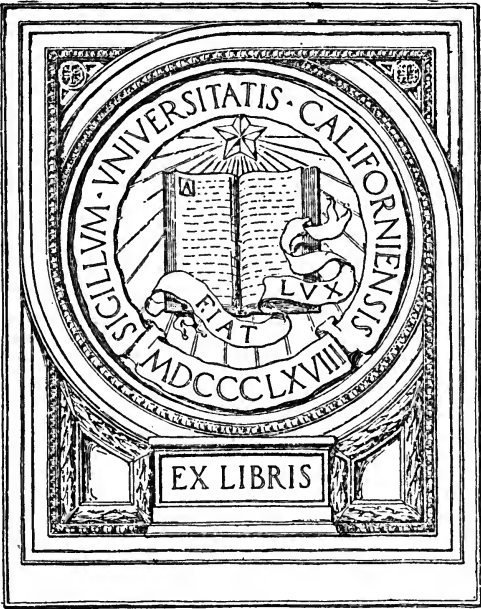


Poems

Samuel Loveman

26476
1911

GIFT OF
Ambrose Bierce



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For Ambrose Beecher
With the sincere esteem, affection
and gratitude of
Samuel Loveman

November 27, 1911.



POEMS

by

SAMUEL LOVEMAN



Cleveland, O.

Published For The Author.

1911

70 740
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IN PIERROT'S GARDEN.

I.

There's a lark that's drunken with the daedal moon,
And I sing to the shy-fledged singer;
Lonesomest thing in the world but one,
He bids me wait and linger.

Hush, little brother your heart is fire,
Hush, little one and forget;
He will not tarry, but wings him higher,
And my eyes are wet, are wet.

II.

This is the way the moon comes up
From under the glimmering fallow fields;
First but the rim of a silver cup,
Where the farthest twilight primrose yields
Her earthly beauty up;

And now where the deep light winks abrim,
You can see it flutter and fail for breath,
And a single star falls rapt and dim—
I call it Death.

III.

These are my moths, a brooding slumber
Falls from their painted placid wings,
The shifting dusk is white with their number,
They stir to the song one sings.

Into the heart of a poppy they hover,
Out of the purple starlit night;
Ah, they are gone now, poppy and lover—
I am their short delight.

IV.

Do you hear it?—my bubbling nightingale,
With a thousand notes to a single trill;
The moon and the stars are passion-pale,
Listen they must at will.

Such a world of ache, such an ancient wrong,
I have tried to fathom it all forsooth;
But the deep night covers the singer and song,
And youth, it cries—youth—youth!

V.

I wonder what the night can hold
Beyond the sea-blue sloping boughs,
The heart of all the west is gold,
I wonder why it glows.

My thoughts lie heavy on my eyes,
I have so many dreams to dream,
So many little fantasies,
To solve and scheme.

They creep upon me unawares,
They flutter in and out my brain,
Each one finds housing in my prayers,
I hold them free from stain.

ODE TO DIONYSUS.

I.

O thou, from whose blown brow the vine-leaves fall,
Into thy beaker brimmed with Attic wine;
At whose behest the hoofed Pans do call,
Across the curved pathway where thy shrine
Lies swarded deep in arbutu-boughs that stall
Linkt faun and satyr, nymph and bacchanal;

Methinks I saw thee wind thy lovely way,
Into the wood's heart scarce at break of day,
Heard the shrill fluting of thy maenads,
And glimps'd thy dusky shepherd-lads,
Purse their soft lips to pray.

II.

Hither came Psyche, Cupid by her side,
I heard them whisper virginal sweet vows;
She pluckt an azure blossom, dewy-eyed,
He bent to kiss her lips beneath the boughs,
His pinions fluttering wide.
Hither stept rosy Dian from the rest,
To pledge her maidenhood before thy shrine;
Two winged boys perch on each budding breast,
As chaste as Appenine.
And all the faun-folk, pouting lips awry,
Entered the old Ephesian solitude,
Lingered a sweet space, then with half a cry,
Vanished into the wood.

III.

O fairer than the buds that bind thy brow!
O sweeter than the lips that press thy own!
I will forsake all chances of renown,
And bear me gentle suppliance to thy vow;

Yet make me thine, and by forgotten rills,
Down quiet fallows into shadowing deeps,
Where Love with ivied thyrse unheeding keeps
And Time suns aimlessly—
Be mine the night that laps the lonely hills,
The sleep that hinges on eternity.

ODE TO CERES.

I.

Sweet Mother, saffron-haired and argent-eyed,
That holdst four seasons in thy mellowing hand;
Foisson and plenty on thy measur'd side,
Wisdom and warmth at thy uncurbed command;
That with braced breath at dusky-veined eve,
Stirrest the furrow and the winnowing wain,
What time with fragrant finger thou let'st fall,
Soft-shining from the pressure of thy sieve,
A dew ambrosial—
Bow thy dim head, withhold thy golden rain.

II.

Not aegis-bearing Jove with gulfy might,
Nor great-eyed Juno, deathless and divine,
Hold half the grace, kind Mother, half the light,
Enkindled in the splendour of thy sign;

Our fallows coucht with oxen serve thy haste,
Consume them not but lend thy pitying heart;
Fountful thy wheaten measure, choose our seed,
And when the north with reedy rein lays waste
Moist hill and ample mart,
Shelter us with thy azure robe at need.

III.

O love divine! O deep immortal grief!
Still dost thou yearn for Enna's dewy fields?
Thine, thine the rapture whence each budding leaf,
Bespeaks the favour that thy blest bed yields.
O Mother, great bright Mother, let thy light
Shine on us with the wisdom of thy girth,
Clip close our sheaves, o'erbrim our fruitful herd
Sacred and silver-bright,
And make and purge with thy most-weighty word,
The rich divinity of this swart earth.





FRA ANGELICO.

This is a babe Angelico painted,
Red chubby cheeks and the daintiest nose,
A flaxen poll that the years have sainted,
Yet somehow, it glows.

You see the budding lips half pursed,
It seems but yesteday they smiled,
Acanthus-like i' the gold dispersed,
Eyes bluely mild.

Where the sleeve's frail hem slips down and under,
Ah, what a miracle of hands!
Not the slightest swerve to mark a blunder,
Superb it stands.

Did you hold it perchance to your heart encrusted,
You, Angelico (Fra by grace),
Till its spacious wisdom bloomed and dusted,
Some barren place?

Or, did it creep unawares to your portal,
Weed-overgrown and gray in part,
Then with a bound purge clean immortal,
Some ancient smart?

Ah, Angelico, life is deeper
Than ours the poet's hand can plumb,
Bent that a birthright wakes the sleeper,
Why, we know not, dumb.

Only feel that in spite of the metals,
Dross and the manifold slag that glows,
Somewhere beneath it with perfect petals,
Slumbers a rose.

Lippi would rim it in lucent letter,
Sandro bejewelled with easy grace,
But you, Angelico, saw it all better—
A perfect face.

SONG.

Blossoms, blossoms, pink and white
Under the silver boughs;
What is it, reason or delight,
Who knows, who knows?
But your eased burden lies,
In our empty melodies.

DIRGE.

Close thine eyes, the night is come,

Leave the world's desire,

Kiss thy love ere thou lie dumb,

Let none thy smart inquire,

Fame and fortune are but lies,

Dross, beside thy mistress's eyes.

Reap thy sowing, thou hast need

Of its decaying measure,

Time will pluck it at his heed,

Grant it at his leisure.

All thy glories are but one,

Night and deep oblivion.

Wrap thy sheet about thy head,

Think thee pleasant dreams,

All is done that hath been said,

Life is what it seems.

Tho' thy sorrow held the sea,

Lasting sleep awaiteth thee.

TO P. G.

There lies a nook in the imminence of night,
Flooded with fire and dew, all lost delight,
Things that the iron world chose to forget,
There in the pendulous azure dusk are set;
And grief that brimm'd itself to joy and wrought
Happiness in the aching vast of thought,
Faces that glimmering quiet acquiesce,
Knowing the end as barren bitterness,
Anguishing all, yet by the ebb'd stars,
Still'd to the peace that neither makes nor mars.
This paradise, you see, is none of mine,
I rail at all things, human and divine,
Half faun, half satyr—shyer than those broods
That flit above your moonlit mountain woods;
Confess me neither, dub me what you will,
Ixion sleepless, Tartarus baleless, nill!
I miss your ministry, your patient laws,
Impelling purposes and divine saws,
Gusty in none but golden everywhere,
Autumn that spurs the subduance of the year.
Wiser than misty Spring whose violet,
Plays Ariel to the delicate woods and wet,

Or Summer, poppy-bound with sultry fire,
Ruining glitter, wandering feet that tire.
You, who would fathom better things in me,
Than the dull moan of bowed humanity,
Who glimpse the beauty that my aims would strive,
The winged spirit and the darkling gyve,
Unutterable loveliness and love,
Life trembling lest her bliss of wonder move,
And in the veined marble of my rhyme,
See the unwinnowing temper hued by time;
I take my cue, and in your equal trust,
Shapen a roseal splendour from the dust.

—July 31, 1911.

LINES.

I know no light beyond the night,
I see no star to pierce the star,
But still'd and windless in my sight,
There pass the dreams that once were fair.

Oh! to have known and lost all this,
The brimming youth, the joy to reap,
And in its stead a transient bliss,
To drift in unforgetting sleep.

April 20, 1911.

To toil with fools, to drudge with slaves
And keep above them giant-wise;
To know the world is full of knaves,
Yet deem it but one's miseries.

Heine, thy spirit I invoke,
Blood of one blood, our race divine,
Invest me with thy glittering yoke,
Poison me with thy fairy wine.

Give me to know the world as 't is,
Bereft of joy and bitter-bare,
And leave me in my dreams but this,
The gift of beauty everywhere.

May 30, 1911.

A TWENTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY.

One last sweet look at boyhood's fledgeling gleam,
A mutinous onset on the rapt sea-marge;
I must not falter in my destin'd dream,
I must not tarry for the day is large.
So much defected, so much to redeem,
The sleep that circles in our wearied eyes,
The love that clutches at old memories,
How can I grasp it all, the subtle scheme?

Only the beauty of the fluttering light
That each divining loveliness forbears,
This, lest oblivion creep upon and smite
Our nature with the sanctity of tears—
Blind, groping children of inevitable night,
That spins its fabric on our inverse prayers.

FROM HEINE.

I.

Shadow-loves and shadow-kisses,
Shadow-life—O sweet, sweet, sweet!
Did you think that all your blisses
Would not fleet?
Those we love and fain would cherish
Vanish like the dreamful past,
And the heart itself must perish
And the eyelids close at last.

II.

The world is so sweet
And the sky is so blue,
The roses are drunken
With dreamless dew—
Yet I would be at rest
On some dead love's breast.

III.

The roses bud and blossom,
And wither on the heath;
They bud and blossom and wither
And that's the way of death.

I know this and all my pleasure,
Loses its love and zest,
My heart is so bright and witty,
And yet it bleeds in my breast.

IV.

My songs, my songs are poison'd,
How could it be otherwise?
You have poured your glowing venom
Into their melodies.

My songs, my songs are poison'd,
How could it be otherwise?
My heart holds many serpents
And your sweet eyes.

V.

Death is the cool sweet night, they say,
And life but the breath of a sultry day;
It darkens and sleep has come desired,
The day has made me tired.

Over my bed thro' the treetops pale,
I hear the song of a nightingale,
She sings, she sings of love and laughter,
I listen, but the tears come after.

VI.

Ilse.

I am the Princess Ilse,
And I live at Ilsenstein;
O come with me to my palace,
And you shall be only mine.

Over my snow-white shoulders,
And by my ivory side,
You shall love to the world's end
Whatever the woe betide.

And I shall love you and kiss you,
And love you and kiss you again,
As I did to the Emperor Heinrich,
That princeliest of men.

The dead are dead forever,
And only the living live,
But I am youth and beauty,
Eternal the joy I give.

And only my arms shall enfold you,
And only your lips shall know,
What I did to the Emperor Heinrich,
When he heard his trumpets blow.

OEDIPUS AT COLONUS.

Who rose like shadows between man and God.
—Shelley.

Oedipus

Who comes?

Antigone

Haemon, my lord.

Oedipus

Make fast the door.

There's terror in the barren wind tonight,
Our privacy's unsur'd.

Haemon

Not as a foe—

Oedipus

But like the cormorant and musing owl
That feign a prayer in slaying. Hence, away!
There are no kin where beggary sits scant
And suffers for a pittance.

Antigone

A true friend.

Whose heart stood ever on the fallen side
And priveleged the losing. He brings news,
Good news, we trust, to make ill fortune sweet.

Oedipus

But quick, or ere our ruined thoughts forget.

Haemon

O good my Lord, the princes both are slain,
Fall'n in a quarrel fostered by the king;
The eldest lies unburied.

Antigone

Patience, Gods!

Lest I lose hope. This is the flaw that coils
Our searching patent. Oh! he weeps not yet,
But stirr'd by the extremity of ache,
Holds the dew scathless.

Oedipus

Something there cracks within!

Haemon

Courage, good friends, for of the moving kind,
These are but bolts that shoot invisibly.

Oedipus

Girl, hast thou fed them yet?

Antigone

My Lord, my Lord!

Oedipus

The poor, the poor, that with unvised mouths,
The piteous air importunate and load.
I would have 'em all, all fed.

Antigone

He only hears.

Pledges that follow like the sweet south wind
And leave no wake in peering. Father, father!
O grief-recounted heart that bleeds to fix
A finger on earth's cheapened misery.
Poor seared eyes!

Oedipus

Let me be filial censor.

Swear, there are no more honest men i' the world,
Swear, that the best of us will err, lie, thief,
Throttle the mother's milk, convent such crime
And serious depredation of regard,
That heaven stooping to the lips of hell,
Breathe dross'd and vary-hued. Swear, swear, swear!

Antigone

Still!

You drift on passion's sea, that bears a host
Of wrecks precipitate and viewless craft.
Take trust and anchor, all things work to good,
We cease not to believe in miracles.

Oedipus

How? how? we shall have cause for joy full soon,
Sorrow comes after. Let there be all things said
And nothing done. Look you, I am not vile,
Only incapable of making good
Half-blown offenses and their chariest truths.
O monstrous! monstrous! I that feel, fawn, feed,
To call my brother elod to the dull earth,
And tread him as we do the brooded worm.

I am well paid—well paid, I say! no need
To bare myself to the annealing wind
And beg for penitence a wintry shift,
The quick confusion of our bitter bliss
Signs chaos into surety again—
I shall sleep the long night out at last.

Antigone

No! No!

Not yet! I'm all alone in the world.

Oedipus

Soft, soft!

The little children call me from the dark,
Eteocles and Polynices—sons all,
I held them dandled at my naked knee,
And sucked fond kisses from their cherub lips,
But none of them would come, none to help bear,
My whole world's weight of leaden misery.

Antigone

Stay quenchless, eyes, until we weep our fill,
My lord, I did not leave you, I—I came.

Oedipus

The mist between us works a deadly bar!
I would see sweet eyes, know many numerous things,
And let graced wit my madness overblaze.
Comfort me, comfort me!

Antigone

I do, but O!

My heart's top-heavy.

Oedipus

Steep it in molten brine.
And let there be a new dependency
To breed quarled serpents. Beggar thy loveliness!
Thy soul's the cistern, at the bottom lies
Their golden custom's vital esquiry.
Alas! alas! I am so wretched, wretched—
The end discrowns our need.

Antigone

Sigh hush, and sleep.
What use to war with gods?

Oedipus

With my spent power,
And from my degradation's dying stamp,
What though I reckon their fleecy thunderous hail,
I curse—I curse—

Antigone

Woe's me! leave it unsaid.

Oedipus

The butterfly that scaped the crawling stage!
Be as thou ever wast, best of thy kind,
Kiss me—I face the dark—what, what, what, what!
It breaks—

Dies.

Haemon

Our jove-like souls are instruments
That quaver sometime in their playing. Rest,
Life's but a moment's space of wilderment,
Set in a sudden darkness. There's the sway
That profits by no fortune.

Antigone

Done's the dream.
I close thine eyes, I smooth thy stricken brow,
Tenderly gods, the fault was not his own.

Haemon

Where now, Antigone?

Antigone

To Thebes, my lord.

Haemon

The king gainsays all kindness in his mood,
His heart of stone derides that flawless gem
That burns in freezing. Measure your life with mine,
I mean the intent, and let our fortunes be
One and commingled. It may hap that both
Shall find some purpose meet.

Antigone

My duty first.
The falcon we have strook deserves perforce,
Such pity that the clouded heart can give.
We yoke our sorrows to the midnight stars,
And take their weight in silver.

Haemon

Ah, not so.
To dare the omnipotence of the Gods,
And leap within their golden graciousness,
This were most nobly done. But where the vow,
Lessens itself upon the deeded heart,
Were it not wise, think you Antigone,
To rear and love self first?

Antigone

My hand alone
Must pile the laurel on his unbalmed corse,
And kiss the ghastly death-dew from his eyes.
I were not woman else.

Haemon

Then hear the truth.
Our father's edict harbours instant death,
With no more pity than the viewless air,
That slays with kissing honey.

Antigone

O just Gods!
Make me unalterable to the end.
Not fire, nor famine, and the halter's scourge,
Swerve my set cause, but when the work is done,
Give my grief rein to mourn the dear departed,
And dew their noble memory in tears.
Lie low! lie sweet! others have done the same,
That drew not half the penance, summ'd not all
Commitment on their head, but as it is,
We thank the smiling Gods.

Haemon

Then take me with thee,
And come what may, I'll follow in thy steps,
The sea runs on forever.

Antigone

Like our souls,
That ebb and break. I go alone, my Lord.
Farewell, farewell.

Haemon

Love speed you.



L67P6
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